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SUPPORT TROOPS FROM V CORPS' 1ST ARMORED DIVISION TRAIN TO SURVIVE IN GUNNERY EXERCISE

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GRAFENWOEHR TRAINING AREA, Germany – Gunnery is traditionally the time of year when tank and Bradley armored fighting vehicle crews qualify their “rides,” proving they are combat ready.



SGT CHRISTOPHER STANIS

A Soldier from Headquarters and Headquarters Troop of V Corps' 1st Squadron, 1st U.S. Cavalry, 1st Armored Division fires a .50 caliber machine gun during the squadron's Iron Warrior Tables training in Grafenwoehr, Germany. The training took place in conjunction with the unit's biannual tank and Bradley gunnery from mid-January to mid-February.

But the 1st Squadron, 1st U.S. Cavalry of V Corps' 1st Armored Division had something new in store for its recent month-long gunnery exercise here.

Adhering to the Army philosophy that

“Every Soldier is a rifleman,” the

Blackhawks introduced “Iron Warrior

Tables” to their gunnery rotation. Iron

Warrior Tables focus on small arms and crew-served weapons training for Soldiers not traditionally considered riflemen, such as mechanics, medics and cooks.

“We’re mirroring tank and Bradley gunnery, but for the individual Soldier,” said 1st Sgt. Zaifuddin Graves, Headquarters and Headquarters Troop first sergeant.

"No area is off limits from attacks," said 1-1st Command Sgt. Maj. David Davenport.

"The Soldiers running the (logistics convoys) can't rely on combat arms Soldiers to always be around. They need to be able to defend themselves."

To meet that goal, those Soldiers conducted basic individual weapon qualifications on the M16A2 rifle, M4 carbine and 9mm pistol before moving on to basic dismounted and mounted crew-served weapons training.

The training gave Soldiers like Spc. Hampton Mack their first opportunity to fire crew-served weapons.

"It's not like normal training, and we're not stuck in the office," said Mack, an armored personnel carrier mechanic. "This was a great opportunity, and I'm enjoying it."

Senior 1-1st leaders said future field rotations will include tables such as reactive firing, firing with both hands, and firing from a moving convoy.

The bottom line of the Iron Warrior Tables is to give Soldiers a better chance of survival in combat environments.

"If we make sure we're qualified on our weapons, when we go to (combat) we'll know how to fire them," said Sgt. Mitchell Lyons, a Bradley Armored Fighting Vehicle mechanic.

"When the time comes, we won't go and get killed because of lack of training."

